United Nations E/AC.51/2002/L.6/Add.23

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: Limited
3 July 2002

Original: English

Committee for Programme and Coordination
Forty-second session
10 June-5 July 2002
Agenda item 9
Adoption of the report of the Committee on its forty-second session

Draft report

Rapporteur: Mr. Alejandro **Torres Lépori** (Argentina)

Addendum

Programme questions: Proposed revisions to the medium-term plan for the period 2002-2005

Item 4 (b)

Programme 25
Political affairs

1. At its 16th meeting, on 21 June 2002, the Committee for Programme and Coordination considered programme 25, Internal oversight, of the medium-term plan for the period 2002-2005 (A/57/6 (Prog. 25)).

2. The representative of the Secretary-General introduced programme 25 and responded to queries raised during the Committee's consideration of the proposed revisions to the programme.

Discussion

3. Queries were raised regarding the proposed deletion of text related to the realignment of subprogrammes under programme 25. It was noted that the functions should not be deleted in their entirety from the programme, but only moved between subprogrammes in line with the reorganization. In particular, the view was expressed that the text proposed for deletion from the second sentence of paragraph 25.19 should be either reinstated or reflected under subprogramme 1.

02-45351 (E) 030702

4. The references to the Millennium Declaration were noted and clarification of the impact of the Millennium Declaration on the programme was sought.

5. The view was expressed that, taking into account the expected accomplishments outlined in paragraph 25.8, the related indicators of achievement in paragraph 25.9 should reflect, not only the number of recommendations, but also the follow-up to audit recommendations.

6. Clarification was sought on the status of the reorganization of the programme, as the wording in paragraph 25.3 could be interpreted as an indication that the realignment of the subprogrammes had not yet been implemented.

Conclusions and Recommendations

7. **The Committee recommended that the General Assembly approve the revisions proposed by the Secretary-General to programme 25, Internal oversight, of the medium-term plan for the period 2002-2005, subject to the following modifications:**

(a) In paragraph 25.2 delete the new proposed text;

(b) In paragraph 25.3, first sentence, replace the words "would realign the existing" with the words "has realigned the previous";

(c) In paragraph 25.7, retain the original wording — "undertake management audits, reviews and surveys to improve the structure of the Organization and its responsiveness to the requirements of programmes and legislative mandates" — of the medium-term plan for the period 2002-2005 (A/55/6/Rev.1);

(d) In paragraph 25.9, retain the original wording — "a more effective use of financial resources in order to guarantee the implementation of programmes and mandates and more effective procedures" — of the medium-term plan for the period 2002-2005 (A/55/6/Rev.1);

(e) In paragraph 25.19, amend the second sentence to read: "The Division, while providing management consulting services to improve the level of service delivery and to enhance the Organization's responsiveness to the requirements of programmes and legislative mandates, will examine, review and appraise the use of financial resources in order to ensure the implementation of programmes and legislative mandates; and ascertain compliance of programme managers with the financial and administrative regulations and rules as well as with the approved recommendations of external oversight bodies";

(f) In paragraph 25.20, retain the original wording — "greater compliance with General Assembly directives, established regulations, rules, policies and procedures; enhancement of transparency and accountability within the Organization; and" — of the medium-term plan for the period 2002-2005 (A/55/6/Rev.1);

(g) In paragraph 25.21, delete the word "and" before (b), and add new text "and (c) the impact of management consulting recommendations made by the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the improvement of the implementation of programmes and activities of the Organization;";

(h) In paragraph 25.21, retain the original wording — "and (d) better coordination with external oversight bodies" — of the medium-term plan for the period 2002-2005 (A/55/6/Rev.1).

United Nations E/AC.51/2002/L.6/Add.24

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: Limited
3 July 2002

Original: English

Committee for Programme and Coordination
Forty-second session
10 June-5 July 2002
Agenda item 9
Adoption of the report of the Committee on its forty-second session

Draft report

Rapporteur: Mr. Alejandro **Torres Lépori** (Argentina)

Addendum

Programme questions: proposed revisions to the medium-term plan for the period 2002-2005

Item 4 (b)

Programme 26
Least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States

1. At its 16th meeting, on 21 June 2002, the Committee considered the narrative of the newly established programme 26, Least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States, of the medium-term plan for the period 2002-2005 (A/57/6 (Prog. 26)).

2. The representative of the Secretary-General introduced the proposed new programme and responded to queries raised during the Committee's consideration of the programme.

Discussion

3. Full support was expressed for the activities to be carried out by the Office of the High Representative for Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, as described under the new programme 26 of the medium-term plan for the period 2002-2005.

02-45357 (E) 030702

4. Questions were raised regarding the organization of the office and the implementation of the programme of action within the three groups of countries under its aegis, as well as the relationships with the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the Office of the Special Coordinator for Africa and the Least Developed Countries. The representative of the Secretary-General clarified that his office was working in close coordination with all the entities of the United Nations system involved. He indicated that the main responsibility of his office was to carry out effective coordination and monitoring of the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010 and the relevant programmes for landlocked developing countries and small island developing States, while UNCTAD focused on research and analytical activities, technical assistance and capacity-building. In that respect it was mentioned that the recurrent report on the least developed countries would continue to be prepared under the responsibility of UNCTAD but on a biennial as opposed to an annual basis.

5. It was felt that a reference to the outcome of the International Conference on Financing for Development (Monterrey, Mexico, March 2002) should be made in the overall orientation.

6. It was noted that the strategy was well spelled out, particularly with regard to maintaining of linkages with other parts of the United Nations system, and that it was in full accordance with the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Follow-up mechanism for coordinating, monitoring and reviewing the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010" (A/56/645). It was also noted that a strategy to avoid duplicative work should be included in order to reflect the creation of the Office of the High Representative.

7. It was noted that, in several paragraphs (e.g., paras. 26.5 and 26.7 (a)), reference was made to the least developed countries only and not to the landlocked developing countries and the small island developing States. It was considered that the document could be improved by including equal references to all three groups of countries considered by the programme. It was also suggested that the list of legislative mandates should be expanded in that respect.

8. It was mentioned that one of the priorities of the Office of the High Representative during the period 2002-2005 would be the preparation, coordination and follow-up of the International Ministerial Meeting of Landlocked and Transit Developing Countries and Donor Countries and International Financial and Development Institutions on Transit Transport Cooperation (General Assembly resolution 56/180, para. 13) and that the role of the Office of the High Representative in the coordination and the involvement of all United Nations agencies and other stakeholders in the preparatory process would be critical to the success of the meeting.

9. The view was expressed that one of the objectives of the programme was to assist the least developed countries in graduating from that category. Another view was that, while graduation was an important concept, it did not mean an automatic improvement of the conditions of life of the people concerned; what was important was to assist countries in improving their social indicators such as health, education etc., so as to measure the progress made in the conditions and quality of life of their people.

10. The view was expressed that the indicators of achievement should be clear, precise and quantifiable in order to truly measure the progress achieved and the impact of activities. It was suggested that paragraph 26.9 should be expanded in that respect.

Conclusions and recommendations

11. **The Committee recommended that the General Assembly approve the text proposed by the Secretary-General for the new programme 26, Least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States, for inclusion in the medium-term plan for the period 2002-2005, with the following modifications:**

Paragraph 26.4

In the first sentence, delete the words "and the subsequent report of the Secretary-General entitled 'Road map towards the implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration' (A/56/326)".

Paragraph 26.5

At the end of the paragraph, replace the words "reverse the trend by assisting countries in the implementation of the Programme of Action" with the words "help the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States to progress towards the achievement of the goals by assisting them in the implementation of the Brussels Programme of Action as well as the Global Framework for Transit Transport Cooperation between Landlocked and Transit Developing Countries and the Donor Community and the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States."

Paragraph 26.6

Insert the words "the follow-up and coordination of" after the words "substantive responsibility for".

Paragraph 26.7 (a)

After "2001-2010", insert the phrase ", the Global Framework for Transit Transport Cooperation between Landlocked and Transit Developing Countries and the Donor Community and the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States".

Paragraph 26.7 (j)

After the word "Assisting", insert the phrase ", as appropriate,".

Paragraph 26.7 (k)

After the words "of these three groups", insert the phrase ", as well as other developing countries,".

Paragraph 26.8

At the end of the paragraph, add the words "as well as of the Global Framework for Transit Transport Cooperation between Landlocked and Transit Developing Countries and the Donor Community and the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States."

Paragraph 26.9 (b)

At the end of the subparagraph, add the words "as well as the Global Framework for Transit Transport Cooperation between Landlocked and Transit Developing Countries and the Donor Community and the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States."

Legislative mandates

Under "General Assembly resolutions", add:

"56/198 Further implementation of the outcome of the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States

56/180 Specific actions related to the particular needs and problems of landlocked developing countries"

United Nations E/AC.51/2002/L.6/Add.25

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: Limited
1 July 2002

Original: English

Committee for Programme and Coordination
Forty-second session
10 June to 5 July 2002
Agenda item 9
Adoption of the report of the Committee on the work of its forty-second session

Draft report

Rapporteur: Mr. Alejandro **Torres Lépori** (Argentina)

Addendum

Programme questions: evaluation

(Item 4 (c))

Strengthening the role of evaluation findings in programme design, delivery and policy directives

1. At its 3rd and 4th meetings, on 10 and 11 June 2002, the Committee considered the note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) on strengthening the role of evaluation finding in programme design, delivery and policy directives (A/57/68).

2. The Under-Secretary-General for Internal Oversight Services introduced the report.

Discussion

3. The Committee welcomed the report, noting that it was candid, straightforward, comprehensive and useful. It provided an honest assessment of the evaluation function, as currently practised within the United Nations. Concern was expressed at significant non-compliance by programme managers with the rules and regulations governing programme planning, budgeting and monitoring, in particular with regard to the evaluation function. It was noted that a culture of evaluation did not seem to have developed yet within the United Nations, and that evaluation had not been mainstreamed or given adequate priority.

02-45285 (E) 020702

4. The Committee regretted that the majority of programmes did not appear to have developed comprehensive evaluation plans as required by the Rules and Regulations Governing Programme Planning. It was regretted that only 15 programmes had adopted specific measures to enable the relevant intergovernmental bodies and specialized organs to review evaluation findings. The view was expressed that there should be a closer link between performance of management and resource allocation. However, it was recalled that during the Fifth Committee negotiations on results-based budgeting, the decision had been taken to de-link allocation of resources from performance, and to focus instead on the review of factors that made programmes work well or not so well.

5. The Committee supported giving increased attention to self-evaluation. It was noted that some departments fully satisfied the requirements for self-evaluation, and it was hoped that others would follow that example with the help of OIOS. It was suggested that the Committee issue a recommendation to the Economic and Social Council requiring programme managers to undertake regular self-evaluations. It was also requested that the cost of self-evaluation to a department be identified in the programme budget. Observations were made on annex I of the report concerning the capacity within departments to undertake evaluation and the fact that some large programmes did not appear to have evaluation units. It was noted that OIOS itself had four Professional evaluators. The view was expressed that the Committee should encourage strengthening of the sections within OIOS that undertook evaluation.

6. The Committee was pleased that more training was being provided and the efforts undertaken by the Office of Programme Planning, Budget and Accounts on training for results-based budgeting, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 55/231. The hope was expressed that as the results-based budgeting methodology matured, improved self-evaluations would be produced efficiently with existing resources. Clarification was requested as to when the updated manual on evaluation would be published. It was emphasized that results-based budgeting, as adopted in resolution 55/231, should be complementary and not in contradiction with the evaluation of the organization's programmes, as required by the Rules and Regulations Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation (ST/SGB/2000/8).

7. It was enquired whether, in its evaluations, OIOS had given thorough consideration to programmes that had experienced a systematic increase of resource allocation during the previous biennium.

8. Support was expressed for the reduction in the number of in-depth evaluations from two to one per year, so that the evaluation report would be available for a review by inter-governmental bodies prior to review by the Committee. The innovative proposal to introduce thematic evaluations was welcomed, and it was noted that such evaluations would be of particular value for cross-cutting themes and would help to support the implementation of global programmes. Further clarification was requested on the feasibility, scope and criteria for selection of topics for those evaluations and the resources required. Further information was also requested on the experience of other agencies, such as the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the United Nations Development Programme, in undertaking thematic evaluation. Concern was expressed regarding the impact of adopting thematic evaluations on the future periodicity of in-depth evaluation.

9. The view was expressed that the Joint Inspection Unit should be more involved in the preparation of in-depth evaluations with a view to complying with the request of the General Assembly in paragraph 16 of its resolution 56/245.

Conclusions and recommendations

10. The Committee expressed concern that many programme managers did not carry out self-evaluations as stipulated in the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation. The Committee emphasized that heads of departments and offices were accountable to ensure fulfilment of the objectives of article 7 of the Regulations and Rules concerning evaluation.

11. The Committee noted that the implementation of the results-based budgeting should enhance programme performance in a manner that was complementary to the existing evaluation system, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 55/231.

12. The Committee agreed with the proposal contained in the report on strengthening the role of evaluation findings, that the central evaluation activities implemented by the Office of Internal Oversight Services consist of one in-depth evaluation each year, releasing some of the existing capacity to:

(a) Enhance support for self-evaluation by other departments and offices;

(b) Prepare one thematic evaluation on a cross-cutting theme from among the priority areas of work of the Organization included in the medium-term plan.

13. The Committee recommended that the Secretary-General report on the implementation of the proposal contained in paragraph 12 (a) above, in the context of the biennial report of OIOS on strengthening the role of evaluation findings in programme design, delivery and policy directives.

14. With reference to paragraph 12 (b) above, the Committee requested the Secretary-General to entrust the Office of Internal Oversight Services to propose themes for consideration by the Committee at its forty-third session, at which time the Committee would consider commissioning a pilot project on one theme. The pilot project would subsequently be considered by the relevant intergovernmental bodies. The usefulness of that pilot project would be considered by the Committee at its forty-fifth session.

15. The Committee reiterated the need for evaluation of programme activities to be consistent with the provisions of regulation 7.1 of the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation.

16. The Committee recommended that the General Assembly approve the following schedule of in-depth evaluations (to be submitted to the Committee at its forty-third, forty-fourth and forty-fifth sessions, respectively):

(a) Law of the sea and ocean affairs;

(b) Public administration, finance and development;

(c) Human settlements.

United Nations E/AC.51/2002/L.6/Add.26

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: Limited
1 July 2002

Original: English

Committee for Programme and Coordination
Forty-second session
10 June-5 July 2002
Agenda item 4 (c)
Adoption of the report of the Committee on the work of its forty-second session

Draft report

Rapporteur: Mr. Alejandro **Torres Lépori** (Argentina)

Addendum

Programme questions: evaluation

(Item 4 (c))

In-depth evaluation of the subprogrammes on General Assembly and Economic and Social Council affairs and Economic and Social Council support and coordination

1. At its 2nd, 3rd and 4th meetings, on 10 and 11 June 2002, the Committee considered the note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the in-depth evaluation of the subprogrammes on General Assembly and Economic and Social Council affairs and Economic and Social Council support and coordination (E/AC.51/2002/4).

2. The Under-Secretary-General for Internal Oversight Services introduced the report.

Discussion

3. The Committee welcomed the report, noting that it was useful, comprehensive and documented a number of good lessons. The Committee was pleased to see that the General Assembly and Economic and Social Council Affairs Division had overall provided efficient services. The view was expressed that the Division for Economic and Social Council Support and Coordination could be considered a model. Useful innovations such as organizing round tables, panel discussions, seminars and joint meetings with the Bretton Woods institutions were noted.

02-44727 (E) 020702

4. Support was expressed for a more active role of the Secretariat in making suggestions on the grouping and scheduling of agenda items, in submitting timely reports, in improving the utilization of meeting time at the beginning of sessions, and in advising non-governmental organizations on the process of application for consultative status.

5. The question was raised whether the lack of invitations to eminent persons explained the low participation of senior officials from United Nations organizations in the high-level segments, noted in table 4. Concern was expressed regarding the marginal participation of non-governmental organizations from Africa in the work of the Economic and Social Council and the question was raised whether insufficient public awareness was preventing them from increasing their number.

6. Concern was expressed that some recommendations were aimed at enhancing the role of the Secretariat with respect to aspects of matters which were the prerogative of Member States, including issues relating to streamlining the agenda of the General Assembly.

7. The following views were expressed regarding a number of recommendations presented in part one of the report:

(a) *Recommendation 1 (c)*. As the purpose of the joint meetings with the Bretton Woods institutions was to have a frank discussion, some delegations expressed the view that it might not be desirable to produce an outcome document, while others maintained that that represented a good idea;

(b) *Recommendation 1 (d)*. While it was felt that documentation should be provided in a timely fashion to delegations in Geneva, it was suggested that the briefing of delegations in Geneva should be done by the New York missions;

(c) *Recommendation 2*. Concern was expressed about establishing an indicative multi-year horizon for topics to be discussed and it was suggested that the Office of Internal Oversight Services re-examine that issue;

(d) *Recommendation 4*. Concern was expressed that the recommendation was in contradiction with the resolution adopted by the Second Committee every year on operational activities;

(e) *Recommendation 5*. Concern was expressed on the rescheduling of the Economic and Social Council segments throughout the year, because such a measure might affect the participation of small delegations, especially those from the developing countries;

(f) *Recommendation 6 (b)*. The redesign of the Economic and Social Council web site was supported on the condition that such a change would be an enhancement and not a replacement of the existing system, which is widely used by many delegations;

(g) *Recommendation 7*. Delegations emphasized the role of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations in analysing the applications of non-governmental organizations seeking to obtain consultative status with the Economic and Social Council; on the question of enhancing the efficiency of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations, delegations were against the idea of limiting the discussion to previously asked questions, since such a measure could limit the participation of Member States on matters of concern to them.

8. Regarding matters addressed mainly in part two of the document, the Committee expressed serious concern about the continuing problem of the timely issuance of documents. The Committee stressed the importance of delegations' familiarizing themselves with the documents before the sessions and the need to consult their Governments in order to make statements. It was noted that the six-week rule was considered by the Office of Internal Oversight Services to be unrealistic, and clarification was sought on what a realistic deadline for circulating documents would be.

9. Regarding recommendation 1 (a) of part two, it was observed that the recommendation related to the grouping of agenda items and the revitalization of the General Assembly, which would be the subject of upcoming consultations. The issue should therefore not be considered by the Committee until the outcome of those consultations was known and further study of the impact of the recommendation had been made by the Committee.

10. It was further observed that recommendations 1 (a) and (b) of part two of the report were being addressed in the context of the process of reform of the Organization proposed by the Secretary-General in 1997, and they were not approved by the General Assembly. Other similar proposals were being considered in the context of the revitalization of the General Assembly.

11. The view was expressed that the proposals in paragraphs 77 and 78 could have been added to the recommendations presented in the report.

Conclusions and recommendations

12. **The Committee, having considered the report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the in-depth evaluation of the subprogrammes on General Assembly and Economic and Social Council affairs and Economic and Social Council support and coordination (E/AC.51/2002/4), concluded that the conclusions and recommendations included in part one of the report should be reviewed by the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session in July 2002 and by its relevant subsidiary bodies, as well as by the competent Main Committees of the General Assembly.**

13. **The Committee noted that some of the recommendations contained in part two of the report related to issues that were being or had been conclusively discussed by the General Assembly and its relevant bodies under various items of the agenda and, in that regard, invited the Committee on Conferences to consider recommendations 1 (c) and (d) and 2 contained in the report, and stressed that, in considering recommendation 2, the need for the provision of adequate services to Member States be kept in mind.**

14. **The Committee, having considered the report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services, requested the Secretary-General to take into account the views of all Member States in future evaluation reports of the Office without a selective approach, and stressed the need for the conclusions and recommendations to be reflected objectively, while ensuring justifiability and transparency.**

15. **The Committee expressed deep concern about the question of late issuance of documentation and emphasized that the six-week rule should continue to be observed.**

United Nations E/AC.51/2002/L.6/Add.27

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: Limited
1 July 2002

Original: English

Committee for Programme and Coordination
Forty-second session
10 June-5 July 2002
Agenda item 4 (c)
Adoption of the report of the Committee on the work of its forty-second session

Draft report

Rapporteur: Mr. Alejandro **Torres Lépori** (Argentina)

Addendum

Programme questions: evaluation

(Item 4 (c))

In-depth evaluation of legal affairs

1. At its 4th meeting, on 11 June 2002, the Committee considered the note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the in-depth evaluation of legal affairs (E/AC.51/2002/5).

2. The Under-Secretary-General for Internal Oversight Services introduced the report. The representative of the Secretary-General responded to the questions raised during the Committee's consideration of the report.

Discussion

3. The Committee expressed satisfaction with the overall good performance of the Office of Legal Affairs. The Committee noted the efforts made by the Office to improve the quality of its services and the timeliness of its reports and also noted the additional measures needed to consolidate those improvements.

4. The Committee noted that there were legal aspects that needed to be attended to in all sectors of the Organization. The view was expressed that the Office of Legal Affairs should be considered as a centre for expertise and resources available to other departments and offices through training and secondment of staff as needed. It was also felt that there was a need for consistent legal expertise both in the

02-45315 (E) 020702

contractual administration at Headquarters and in the field, especially in peacekeeping operations. It was noted that the response time to requests for legal advice needed to be shorter in certain circumstances.

5. The remark was made that, with regard to paragraph 10 of the evaluation report, it was not appropriate to characterize the view of one participant as being expressed by a larger group or a majority of Member States.

6. The Committee appreciated the use of model agreements. It was noted that model agreements could not apply in all cases and that there was a need to amend standard texts in detail. The Committee supported the recommended establishment and maintenance of a reference collection of recent agreements and contracts, which would benefit Member States as well. Clarification was requested as to why the administrative instruction on the drafting of agreements with host countries had not been revised since 1987. Regarding the settlement of commercial claims made against the Organization, the view was expressed that it is important to consider conciliation before arbitration.

7. Coordination was pointed to as a concern due to the large number of organizations involved in legal affairs. The view was expressed that the main themes of the in-depth evaluation were the need for coordination and the increased workload of the Office of Legal Affairs, and that the Fifth Committee should be made aware of the situation. It was noted that there was an increasing need for coordination in international trade law and that the staff of the International Trade Law Branch of the Office of Legal Affairs had been kept at their 1968 level, which was a worrying fact.

8. The Committee was pleased with the steps taken to resolve the problem of backlog in the publication of treaty and other legal material and trusted that the matter was being kept under constant review to achieve the elimination of backlog within a specified time frame. It was noted that the responsibility for delays in issuance of reports and publications was to be attributed to the special rapporteurs of the International Law Commission and the translation and document processing units of the Secretariat. The view was expressed that a recommendation could have been made on the matter.

9. With regard to recommendation 10 (a), the view was expressed that the matter was not within the competence of the Office of Legal Affairs. Concern was also expressed with recommendation 10 (b), under which the Office of Legal Affairs would prepare background documents on legal issues for delegations. It was not believed that such activity would be an appropriate use of the limited resources of the Office. It was also pointed out that there were existing backlogs that the Office should address prior to deploying its research resources in new areas. It was felt that recommendation 10 (b) could be of great benefit to the Sixth Committee in providing necessary background information on legal aspects of the topics that were rarely covered by United Nations bodies.

10. Views were also expressed that support provided by the Office of Legal Affairs to other departments and offices, at their request, should be developed through such measures as training and outposting of legal officers, as recommended in the in-depth evaluation. It was also felt that more attention should be given to regional issues in the context of fellowship programmes in international law, as

recommended in the in-depth evaluation, and that the views of regional organizations should be sought.

11. It was furthermore mentioned that substantive evaluation of vendors' adherence to the basic values of the United Nations system should not be conducted by the Office of Legal Affairs, nor by legal advisers alone.

12. With respect to comments on legal topics requested from Member States, the view was expressed that the number of questionnaires sent to Member States exceeded their capacity to respond. In that regard, it was regretted that the evaluation report did not mention the recently adopted useful practice of addressing specific questions to Member States for discussion during the debate of each item in the Sixth Committee.

13. Delegations considered that the departmental web site should be improved, in particular with a view to providing full-text materials free of charge and a balance between languages.

14. The efforts that the Office of Legal Affairs had made towards gender parity were noted with appreciation.

Conclusions and recommendations

15. **The Committee recommended approval of recommendations 1 to 7, 9 and 11 to 20 of the in-depth evaluation.**

16. **The Committee highlighted the importance of the Office of Legal Affairs and of the central legal services, which might be needed in all areas of the Organization.**